

Restitution, Work Detail & Community Service Programs

Judge Karen Lawson

Lake County Juvenile Court

RESTITUTION PROGRAM

The Lake County Juvenile Court initiated a restitution program many years ago. The program is bifurcated in its objective, first to insure that the victims are compensated for their loss and second, to hold juveniles accountable for their delinquent action. The Court assists the victims in completing the victim impact statement, investigates claims, monitors payments to victims, answers pertinent questions as they relate to restitution, and mediates conflicts between the juvenile's family and the victim's family to affect an equitable resolution.

Juveniles are expected to pay restitution to victims in a timely and responsible manner. This will reflect on their sincerity toward making amends, and is their opportunity to demonstrate good qualities. In this regard, restitution is the ultimate resolve to apologize.

The Court created a Restitution Work Detail in February, 2010 in order to assist victims in gaining their restitution in a timely manner. The program was designed for younger offenders who are not employable based on age or other factors. The juvenile reports to the Painesville YMCA on Saturday mornings and is supervised by a Court staff. They are required to work while at the YMCA completing maintenance tasks assigned. Each youth can earn up to \$500.00 if they successfully complete up to 12 Saturdays. Upon completion of the assigned programs the Court then directs payment to the victim in the case.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

The Community Service Program began during the same time as the Restitution Program. This program has been accepted and supported by a variety of nonprofit organizations in and around Lake County. These organizations have expressed positive results from this program. Juveniles ordered to perform community service are not confined to render their service within the bounds of Lake County, but may also complete their

service at any nonprofit organization.

Community Service is an alternative to incarceration for juveniles who have committed

less serious offenses. It is a process by which juveniles are required to make amends to the community, and be held accountable for the offense which they have committed. Juveniles who are ordered by the Court to participate in this program are given a list of suggested sites where they can perform their community service. It is the responsibility of the juveniles, with the help of parents, to initiate contact with a particular site and arrange the logistics such as time, day, and transportation to and from the site.

The juveniles are required to work without pay for a prescribed number of hours within a designated time frame. They must report on time for their community service and are expected to put in an honest day's work. In many instances, by demonstrating good work ethics and positive qualities during the community service program, the juveniles are able to secure permanent jobs with the organization they are providing service.